The D[illegible]tor of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

26 April 1985

The Honorable Caspar Weinberger
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Cap,

[redacted] STAT

[redacted] I think you will be interested STAT
in the London Times editorial which is also attached.

Yours,

William J. Casey

Attachment:

[redacted] STAT

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TIMES PAST
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GENEVA INTERMISSION

When the Geneva talks started on February 12 there was a danger that the Soviet propaganda campaign against President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative would be continued and intensified outside the framework of negotiations, making a nonsense of the idea of secret discussions at Geneva. Today the teams adjourn for five weeks to take stock in their respective capitals and, though the Soviet campaign against SDI has been continued, it has not been carried to the point where the West could doubt how much store the Soviet leaders set by secret negotiations. The talks may not have proceeded very far towards any kind of outline arms control agreement, but there is now the clear prospect of a Soviet/American summit during the year, and the Soviet side still seems to hope that the SDI will be negotiated away.

It may take a long time for the Soviet leadership to accept finally that the idea of strategic defence is not negotiable, certainly for so long as President Reagan is in control. Given a successful first phase of research and development that would probably apply also to his successor. A defensive philosophy is always going to be preferable to a democratic government if the technology exists to make it work. For nearly forty years the technology of missiles has favoured the offense so that western governments have had to maintain a strategy of retaliation as their means of defence, having neither the technical means nor the resources to provide a purely defensive alternative.

Now we are facing a period, which may last a generation or more, when the emerging technology is more favourable to defensive systems. That means that the unit cost of any defensive equipment is cheaper than the corresponding offensive weapon. In the circumstances, no democratic leader could ignore such an opportunity to provide his people with a purely defensive system of strategic

Official opinion in Europe is beginning to stabilise more firmly behind the Strategic Defence Initiative. France and Germany in their different ways will clearly become involved in some aspect of the programme. So will the British Government when it has overcome the attack of stage fright revealed by Sir Geoffrey Howe's speech last month.

The focus will then shift from the technicalities of space-based missile defence to the land and air battle in Europe. Here colossal defensive advances can now be achieved. When President Reagan made his original speech in March 1983 he emphasised the duality of the concept of SDI – defensive against incoming nuclear missiles on the one hand, and a spectacular improvement in the non-nuclear conventional defences as well. "America does possess now the technologies to attain very significant improvements in the effectiveness of our conventional non-nuclear forces," he said.

"That has a much more immediate application to European involvement, than does the spectacle of ballistic research. It is certainly the British Government's desire to become involved with technical research at a level which could be developed in a wide variety of secondary applications outside the defence field. That may be easier to achieve from the existing technologies already in American possession, exploited more widely as a result of the European effort, than by entering an uneven partnership in which Britain would have to cope for limited contracts in missile defence without acquiring the ability to profit from such work in a wider field.

NATO has already adjusted to a new series of tactical plans based on the expectation of a decisive technological superiority over Warsaw Pact formations. The operational doctrines emphasise greater weapon accuracy, rapid increases in mobility, a wider range of targets and undreamt of speed and precision

Western fire power. This would reverse the present balance of forces in Central Europe, where Warsaw Pact firepower and manpower has heavily outnumbered the West. The American Defence Secretary, Mr Weinberger, promised to share in this technology at the December 1983 meeting of NATO defence ministers, but his European counterparts have been slow to take up the offer because the extent of the technological gap between Europe and America has hitherto not been fully appreciated in Europe.

Nevertheless through the impact of its superior technology the West is now confronted with an opportunity to achieve a reduction in strategic and tactical vulnerability which has been inconceivable for most of the last forty years. It may not be surprising that European governments were initially slow to respond to this idea and were wary of accepting the technological claims made by American representatives. On the other hand the Reagan administration has not been forthcoming about the full extent of its technical achievement, perhaps because it has been waiting for more convincing demonstrations of European support for the principle of SDI before revealing any more technical secrets.

In the pause before the Geneva teams meet again, President Reagan will have been to Europe at a Western summit and the Alliance as a whole will undoubtedly have a clearer idea of where everybody stands on SDI and in the non-nuclear battlefield application of that technology within NATO. At the resumption of the Geneva talks on May 30, therefore, it should be clear to the Soviet Union that the American programme will proceed with alliance involvement and support. That will provide a constructive clarification to the negotiations and to the preliminaries which will be necessary before President Reagan and Mr Gorbachov meet later in the year at an East/West